



Broken Hill City Council

... a safe, vibrant, prosperous and culturally rich City achieved through community leadership and sustainable management.

Quote No 61983 - 11/161
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December 22, 2011

Committee Secretary,
Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs,
PO Box 6100
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Secretary,

Inquiry into the Factors Affecting the Supply of Health Services & Medical Professional in Rural Areas

Council is extremely concerned that the Federal Government's Australian Standard Geographical Classification – Remoteness Areas (ASGC-RA) system is resulting in severe service delivery consequences for regional and remote communities.

Council understands that the ASGC-RA is used to determine the relocation and retention incentives that doctors receive for working in particular locations and many small rural towns have been placed in the same classification category as the large regional cities.

Broken Hill and its surrounding region have unique primary health care requirements due to geographical locations as well as major ageing and indigenous population considerations and struggles to attract and maintain health services and medical professionals to the region.

Council's concern is that due to the remoteness of Broken Hill and its surrounding areas, many residents within the area are already unable to receive required medical treatment due to the high cost of travelling to larger Regional Centres or Cities for treatment and Council strongly feels that this issue should be high priority criteria when considering geographical classifications.

Council is very supportive of the Broken Hill University Department of Rural Health plan to expend its already established health facilities to support student teaching and to encourage the students to return to regional and remote areas on completion of their studies.

Council urges the Standing Committee to consider all challenges faced by regional and remote communities in attracting and maintaining health professional and the importance of getting the ASGC-RA balance right to ensure that regional and remote communities are not further disadvantaged by a system that creates inequities in service access.

Yours faithfully,

FRANK ZAKNICH
GENERAL MANAGER

"Broken Hill - the Hill that changed a Nation"